

September 1, 2016 3:00 PM EST
Gearheads Grille at Salt Creek Brewery
466 Old State Rd. 37 N
Bedford, IN 47421

Attendance

Board Members Present:

All-Terrain Vehicle Users- Tim Garrett
Bicyclists- Jessica Hall
Equestrians- Yvette Rollins (Proxy)
Four Wheel Drive Users- Ryan Sweany
Health/Higher Education- Joan Cook
Hikers- Tim Calahan
Mountain Bikers- Jeff Fetterer
Off-Road Motorcyclists- Rick Dorfmeier
Parks and Recreation Agencies- Melody Jones
Pedestrians- Pat Martin
Snowmobilers- Len Neisler
Trail Support Groups- Angie Pool
Users with Disabilities- David Meihls
Water Trail Users- Joe Rozsahegyi

Board Members Not Present

Environmental Groups- Kevin Hardie

DNR Staff:

Dale Brier- Outdoor Recreation
Carman Jackson- Outdoor Recreation
Amy Marisavljevic- Outdoor Recreation

Guests:

Terry Fletcher- Indiana Trail Running, Inc.
Roy Garrett- ABATE
Rayce Guthrie- ABATE
Bill Harvey- ABATE and Salt Creek Brewery
Jay Jackson- ABATE

Meeting Minutes

Welcome

Jeff Fetterer, Trails Advisory Board (TAB) Chair, welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 3:05 PM. He thanked ABATE for the hosting and organizing the pre-meeting activities at Lawrence County Recreational Park. He also thanked Gearheads Grille and Salt Creek Brewery for hosting the meeting and lunch.

Introductions

All TAB members and guests introduced themselves. Jennifer Regan-Wilson gave her proxy to Yvette Rollins.

Approval of the Agenda

Fetterer asked for a motion to approve the agenda unless there were any changes. Ryan Sweany made a motion and Angie Pool seconded. Motion passed.

Review and Approval of June 23, 2016 Minutes

Fetterer asked if the TAB members had a chance to review the minutes and asked for any changes. No changes were suggested. He then asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Joan Cook made a motion and Jessica Hall seconded. Motion passed.

DNR Report

As follow up to the Off-Road Vehicle (ORV) safety discussions held at prior meetings, Amy Marisavljevic reported that the Division of Outdoor Recreation and DNR Law Enforcement partnered this year on an ATV safety display at the Indiana State Fair. Unfortunately, Indiana is on track to have a record year for injuries and fatalities. The ATV Safety display aimed to combat this by promoting the use of helmets, riding the right size vehicle, supervising children, and other safety messages. Also in time for the State Fair, the Division had four new brochures created and printed. Brochures addressed backpacking, paddling, motorized recreation, and destination trails, which highlight premier bike/pedestrian trails, in the state. The Division would like to have brochures for other activities like mountain biking and horseback riding in the future. Marisavljevic stated Jay Keith retired from the DNR Division of Outdoor Recreation in July. The Division hopes to have two new employees soon. Jackson reported that Interlake's gatehouse is officially open and exceeding expectations. Finally, Marisavljevic reminded everyone that there would be no Hoosier Outdoor Experience in 2016.

New Business

RTP Grant Criteria

Fetterer brought up that he would like the Trails Advisory Board to discuss the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) Grant criteria. He mentioned that the RTP criteria seems to fund mostly paved trail projects with land acquisition. He mentioned that a number of good natural surface trail projects struggle to score well given the current criteria. Marisavljevic commented that many of RTP scoring criteria stem from results of the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan as well as the State Trails Plan. With these documents recently being published in 2016, this would be an appropriate time to review the RTP criteria. She and Dale Brier commented that DNR welcomes all feedback from both the Trails Advisory Board as well as user groups. The group discussed things such as the project's overall cost, mileage, people using the trail, multi-use projects, accessibility, and factors not included in criteria such as local economic impact. They also discussed the eligibility of projects, such as maintenance and restoration projects, and how the Indiana RTP grant program compared to those in other states. The group decided that those who are interested in discussing this further, will form a separate subcommittee that will look to do more research and may meet separately in December for a more educated discussion. They might invite Bob Bronson, DNR RTP Grant Coordinator, to better clarify the current program and criteria. Marisavljevic will acquire a list of all those interested and pass it along to Fetterer.

Other Business

Joe Rozsahegyi brought up an issue with wayfinding, signage, and promotion for outdoor recreation activities like parks, trails, and public access sites. He stressed the importance of connecting people to the existing outdoor recreational infrastructure through roadside signage. Brier mentioned that directional signs are put up by INDOT. Pool mentioned that signs are not free as the Cardinal Greenways has explored this idea earlier. She will try to locate her contact at INDOT dealing with directional signs for anyone interested. Jackson mentioned that the United States Forest Service (USFS) has more uniform examples of directional signage with symbols. Brier commented that signage needs to be focused and Jones added that trailheads and access points should be a priority. She also mentioned the possibility of working with the Office of Tourism Development.

Marisavljevic will invite Mark Newman, Tourism Director, to the next TAB meeting. Len Neisler commented that he thinks online resources, maps, and wayfinding rather than physical signs can make a big difference in connecting people to these places. Jones updated everyone that the Google Trekker continues to collect data in Indiana and should be online in the next year.

Jay Jackson thanked everyone for coming out to Lawrence County Recreation Park. He also thanked Rayce Guthrie and Marisavljevic for organizing as well as Salt Creek Brewery for hosting. Terry Fletcher said he appreciated the TAB letting him participate today. Indiana Trail Running, which just became a non-profit, is looking to get more involved in the trail community.

User Group Reports

All –Terrain Vehicles- Garrett stated that signature events like the Hi-Lift Day or upcoming Hallo-O-Wheelin are helping to attract new riders and grow the off-road community. These unique and beginner-friendly events are also helping to make Redbird and Interlake true tourist attractions. Garrett reported the new out-of-state pass has been well received by the park visitors. Finally, Garrett's son will take the Indiana Bicentennial Torch to Redbird SRA in September. Current and former TAB members Yvette Rollins, Pat Martin, and Dan Plath are also participating in the relay.

Bicyclists – Jessica Hall reported that the Bike/Walk Summit held August 29-31 in Indianapolis was a success. The event was organized by Bicycle Indiana (BI) and Health by Design (HbD). BI will now focus on getting ready for the next legislative session and the 2017 Resource Guide.

Environmental Groups – No report

Equestrians – Yvette Rollins reminded everyone of the Indiana Trails Gathering on November 5. The event is only \$10 and the Greenways Foundation (GF) is a partner. The GF continues to move forward on a trail count study done by the Eppley Institute. They will do counts on 18 trails representing urban, suburban, and rural areas. At Yellowwood State Forest (YSF), equestrians will now have access to two new areas. However, there will be many upcoming road closures in and around YSF in the next year. Also at YSF, the Yellowwood Watershed Alliance will now broaden their mission to include more recreational uses. They will host an open house in January at YSF to engage with more recreational users. Roy Garrett inquired about the possibility of motorized users attending. Rollins stated they are welcome, but stressed the group still has a focus on watershed quality issues. She also announced that the Hoosier Backcountry Horseman will give guided trail rides in Hoosier National Forest on National Public Lands Day, September 24. The Indiana Quarter Horse Association will host a fundraiser at September 10 for therapeutic riding centers. The Octoberfest Charity Horse Show will be October 15 at the Hoosier Horse Park in Edinburgh. Capital-to-Capital Ride, a ride from Corydon to Indianapolis to celebrate Indiana's Bicentennial, will be October 9-16. Finally, she reported that unfortunately many of the equestrians trail work days this summer had been canceled due to rain.

Four-Wheel-Drive Users – Sweany reported that the Hi-Lift Day at Redbird SRA was sponsored by Hi-Lift Jacks, an international off-road product manufacturer headquartered in nearby Bloomfield, on August 20. The event, which included food, riding, vendors, and entrainment attracted over 360 vehicles and 850 people. 1,150 pounds of non-perishable food was collected to be donated to a local food bank. Carman Jackson added the customer appreciation day at Redbird SRA in June drew 212 people and also was a big success. Finally, Sweany reported that the Hall-O-Wheelin event will be October 22 at Redbird SRA. It will be a haunted night ride with several “spook areas” along the trails sponsored by local clubs and vendors. A “trunk-or-treat” will also be part of the festivities organized by the Redbird Foundation.

Health/Higher Education- Cook reported that the recently held Indiana Bike/ Walk Summit at Omni Indianapolis was attended by 169 people. The event, which had a variety of workshops and educational sessions, was very well received. She again stated that Indianapolis is one of the 50 cities in the Let’s Move Outside initiative as named by the Department of Interior this summer. A conference for this initiative will be held in November. HbD will be celebrating their ten year anniversary and will continue to work with safe routes to school, complete streets, and other bike/pedestrian partnership projects statewide. HbD will be able to provide active living workshops now to all size communities in Indiana thanks to their new partnership with Purdue Extension as well as the Indiana State Department of Health.

Hikers- Tim Calahan had nothing new to report.

Mountain Bikers – Fetterer reported that Hassmer Fest is September 23-25 at Versailles State Park. The Brown County Epic will be October 7-9 at Brown County State Park (BCSP). Both are fundraisers for mountain bike groups to build more trails. Griffin Bike Park in Vigo County will host their Grand Opening October 15-16. Trail building continues rapidly in both YSF and BCSP despite the rainy weather.

Off-Road Motorcyclists – Rick Dorfmeier reported that large strides continue to be made in off-road motorcycling safety, many through new technology. One of these is the introduction of D3O, an impact protective substance that can replace Styrofoam in typical safety gear. Also new in helmet technology is MIPS, which not only protects the rider’s head from impact, but also from the torque of rotation. Hydration packs continue to get better allowing riders to ride longer without getting over-heated and dehydrated. Finally, he also stated that the Dirt Bike School has trained nearly 200 new riders this year.

Parks and Recreation Agencies- Jones announced that the Indiana Parks and Recreation Association will help host the Indiana Trails Gathering on November 5 in Noblesville. She mentioned this summer, Westfield and communities across Indiana, were swept up in the new Pokémon Go craze. She stated that both their parks and trails have seen an increase in usage by visitors of all ages because of the game. Westfield continues to lead Indiana in trail miles per capita and that will continue to grow as they have three trail projects still to be completed this year.

Pedestrians- Pat Martin announced that Terre Haute will again host the NCAA Division I Cross Country National Championships on November 19 with Pre-Nationals on October 15. In honor of this event, the community will also host of 5k Fun Run on November 18.

Snowmobilers- Len Neisler stated that the Farmer's Almanac is predicting a cold winter with more snow this year. The snowmobile clubs will be gearing up for their busiest time of year this fall when they do their trail work and install days. All of this work is done by volunteers.

Trail Support Groups- Pool stated that the GF continues to work on getting a permanent source of funding for the trails maintenance fund in the next legislative session. She will e-mail out the white paper they are currently working to the TAB so they can help with advocacy. The Cardinal Greenways hosted the Muncie Bikefest in August and unfortunately it rained all three days, making the turnout a bit smaller than expected. However, despite the inclement weather, it still was a successful event. The Cardinal Greenways will host Walk Indiana on September 10 and Biketoberfest on September 24.

Users with Disabilities- David Meihls again thanked ABATE of Indiana for hosting today's festivities.

Water Trail Users- Rozsahegyi stated that stand-up paddleboard (SUP) usage and kayak fishing are becoming extremely popular. Unfortunately, most users of SUPs do not wear PFDs as often as paddling counterparts and have consequently seen high numbers of drownings. Rozsahegyi stated the rise of kayak fishing may help the paddling community to leverage more public access sites, particularly new sites funded by the Division of Fish & Wildlife. Paddling groups in northern Indiana have been especially active this year. This has included efforts to remove log jams, organize group paddles and new programming, increase promotion of water trails, and help build new infrastructure. The annual Sandhill Crane Paddle will be October 16 and is organized by the Northwest Indiana Paddling Association. The number of accessible boat ramps continues to grow statewide. Rozsahegyi stated that the paddling community will continue to try to advocate for another whitewater facility in Indiana, possibly in Columbus. Finally, he mentioned that the best online resource for water trail access information in Indiana is www.paddling.net, which gets much of its information from the American Canoe Association.

Announcements

May 7-10, 2017- International Trails Symposium (Dayton, OH)

June 10-11, 2017- Hoosier Outdoor Experience (Fort. Harrison SP, Indianapolis)

2016 Meeting Dates

December 1, 2016- White River State Park, Indianapolis

Adjournment

Fetterer called for motion to adjourn. Jones made a motion and Dorfmeier seconded. Meeting adjourned at 5:08 PM.